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envstats News and Notes

Environment Statistics Section
United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)/DESA

FOCUS:

Importance of Data, Statistics and Indicators for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

(Contributed by Hiroko Morita-Lou, SIDS Unit, Division for Sustainable Development, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

The SAMOA Pathway, adopted at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in September 2014, includes a section dedicated to *Data and Statistics* (http://www.sids2014.org/samoapathway). The section reflects global commitment to support to SIDS' efforts to strengthen the availability and accessibility of their data and statistical systems; to utilize UN statistical standards and resources in social and environmental statistics; and to improve the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of disaggregated data. Moreover, the UN, among others, is called upon to: a) make greater use of the national statistics and development indicators of SIDS; b) support a sustainable development statistics and information programme for SIDS; and c) elaborate appropriate indices for assessing the progress made in their sustainable development that better reflect their vulnerability and guide them to adopt more informed policies and strategies for building and sustaining long-term resilience. Building on the same emphasis made during the five-year review of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI+5) conducted in 2010, the importance of strengthening national disaggregated data and information systems as well as analytical capabilities for decision-making and the development of vulnerability-resilience country profiles (VRCP), has been underlined.

The first edition of the "Trends in Sustainable Development: Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Report" was published for the MSI+5 in 2010 by the SIDS Unit of the DESA/Division for Sustainable Development (DSD). Given the increasing interest and attention on the issue of data and statistics, the second edition was published in time for the Samoa Conference in 2014. The 2014 SIDS Trends Report (https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1954TR2014.pdf) was a joint undertaking between DSD/SIDS Unit and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) from the planning stage. The joint team started out discussing the outline for the report to reflect the priority themes identified through the SIDS preparatory process for the Samoa Conference (i.e., national, regional and inter-regional assessments and PrepComs). UNSD has advised on the availability and validity of data and statistics which would substantiate the issues to be covered while DSD contacted members of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group on SIDS (IACG) to request suggestions for thematic case studies and photos to be included. UNSD provided expert peer review and some graphics in the preparation of the first draft, while DSD sought for the review by the DESA Editorial Board and arranged lay-out and printing.

In addition to the SIDS Trends Report, UNSD also contributed a special publication of the World Statistics Pocketbook for SIDS (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/pocketbook/WSPB2014SIDS.pdf), an excerpt of the SIDS statistical data from the latest annual World Statistics Pocketbook. The DESA Population Division prepared 2014 SIDS Demographic Wallchart (http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/environment/SID_%202014_%20wallchart.pdf), also as contribution to the Samoa Conference. All of these SIDS-focused data

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and trends analysis were well received particularly by the SIDS delegations at the Samoa Conference and continued to be disseminated to SIDS experts and policy makers at the follow-up events.

In the lead up to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, DSD/UNSD collaboration focused on two areas of work. One strand of efforts related to addressing the general needs of SIDS in relation to data and statistics, and the general call for evidence-based decision-making. An informal Roundtable on Data and Statistics in SIDS was organized inviting SIDS statisticians from countries and regional organizations, a day prior to the start of the forty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission that was held in New York in March 2015. After the presentation by UNSD on the process of ongoing global work on developing SDG indicators, exchange of views among experts focused on the issues of importance from the SIDS' perspectives in the work of the SDGs, including the capacity building needs in data and statistics in SIDS and how the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs need to be aligned. Separately, DSD and UNSD have also been consulting on developing an online SIDS Data Platform based on UNdata (http://data.un.org/) to be hosted on the DSD-hosted SIDS Action Platform.

Another area of collaboration is related to the 9th tranche of the UN Development Account (DA) project entitled "Strengthening the Capacity of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to Assess Progress in the Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy to Mitigate Risks and Reduce Vulnerability" being implemented by DSD/SIDS Unit approved in late 2013 and launched in the fall 2015. The overall and updated objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of selected SIDS in monitoring progress of implementation of the Samoa Pathway, the MSI, and 2030 Agenda by applying the Vulnerability Resilience Country Profile (VRCP). The analytical framework and methodology of VRCP were developed through a series of technical and inter-agency consultation in the context of another DSD-executed project under the umbrella EU-funded Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) project called *ISLANDS*.

A three-day sub-regional workshop was co-organized by DSD and UNDP from 30 September to 2 October 2015 in Cabo Verde for the pilot countries in the AIMS region, namely: Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome, Seychelles and Mauritius, along with UNSD, the UNDP country offices concerned and IOC. Another sub-regional workshop was held in the Caribbean from 7 to 9 October in Barbados for Barbados, Jamaica and Saint Lucia, attended by UNDP, ECLAC Caribbean, CARICOM and OECS. Each workshop had a dedicated session on the role of data and statistics in developing VRCP, facilitated by the UNSD and CARICOM-Statistics representatives, respectively.

A starting point for the development of a country's VRCP is the baseline study conducted in each country to provide a stocktaking of existing data and statistics, and capacity assessment through desk research and consultations with relevant government entities and stakeholders. The VRCP, underpinned by a strong political commitment at the highest level, is then developed through a five-step process through a series of national multi-stakeholder consultation workshops. The VRCP five steps consist of: i) selecting priority themes and major issues for each theme (SAMOA Pathway and SDGs will serve as references); ii) selecting criteria for determining vulnerability and resilience for each theme; iii) selecting indicators for each criteria (global work on SDG indicators could serve as a menu); iv) assessment and rating in 1-5 ratio; and v) rating justification (interpretation) and mapping V-R nexus.

The DA project also has provisions for focused technical assistance, fellowships or exchange of experts for statistical capacity-building, and another round of national and sub-regional workshops for exchange of experiences in developing and applying VRCP. The project timeframe (2015-2017) is seen by the piloting countries to be opportune in exploring integrated planning and monitoring of the Samoa follow up, and nationalization of SDGs in the context of the respective national planning frameworks. The published VRCP Overview for policy makers can be accessed at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=1982&menu=35. The VRCP Guidelines, a working document, are used for training purposes at the national and sub-regional levels.

All these various initiatives demonstrate the importance and positive outcomes of collaboration between the DSD/SIDS Unit and UNSD, with the objective of promoting sound, timely and reliable data to support evidence-based decision making.

UNSD Environment Statistics - Data Collection and Dissemination

UNSD Environmental Indicators disseminate global environment statistics on indicator themes compiled from a wide range of data sources. The themes and indicator tables are selected based on the current demands for international environmental statistics and the availability of internationally comparable data. Indicator tables and charts with relatively good quality and coverage across countries, as well as links to other international sources, are provided under each theme.

Commencing in December 2015, UNSD has been uploading global environmental indicators to its website one theme after another with a view to having all themes uploaded in early 2016. Data are being made available in spreadsheet format to allow for convenient manipulation by the user. Themes being uploaded include air and climate, biodiversity, energy and minerals, inland water resources and waste. The data may be accessed at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/qindicators.htm

The finalized UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire 2013 on Environment Statistics files on water and waste have been uploaded into a specially designed database and have gone through final checks. The data on water and waste for countries included in the Joint OECD/EUROSTAT Questionnaire on the State of the Environment are merged into the database as well. The UNSD environmental indicators tables are compiled from the responses for the UNSD website. The online tables consist of the compilations from the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire as well as indicators from other international sources.

The UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire is sent to all non-OECD/Eurostat countries covering two sections for statistics on waste and water. The biennial UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics serves as a very good and accurate source for different uses, including compiling indicators for several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to water and waste. This data collection was first conducted in 1999, with a request for data from 168 countries. Six subsequent data collection rounds have taken place, with the most recent one in 2013 requesting data from 173 countries.

To support the Report of the Secretary-General in more detail as it pertains to data collection, a Background Document has also been prepared describing UNSD's analysis of responses to each environment statistics variable in the UNSD/UNEP Environment Statistics data collection. Both the Report and the Background Document are available at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/. As described in the Background Document, despite the fact that UNSD has now undertaken seven data collections on waste and water statistics and built some degree of expertise in the field, the response rate for the 2013 data collection was 47%. However, when responses to individual variables are considered, only 32 responses were received out of a possible 173, for example, in the case of precipitation (a response rate of just 18% for this variable), which reveals the great need for capacity development within countries in the field of environment statistics.

Country Files, containing the complete data and footnotes received from each respondent, are uploaded to the website with password protection (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/Questionnaires/index.asp). Country files are available, by request, for national, regional and international organizations that are involved in the collection of environment statistics.

Country Snapshots, which include many of the indicators from the UNSD Environmental Indicators list, in addition to other economic and demographic background information, are currently being updated. These Snapshots provide data about the environment and other related statistics at a point in time that will allow comparisons between countries. The data sources include UNSD as well as several other international organisations. The latest Country Snapshots can be found at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/Questionnaires/country_snapshots.htm.

The next biennial UNSD environment data collection will take place in 2016. Please send any questions or comments to: envstats@un.org.

Climate Change Statistics

In its multi-year programme of work, the Statistical Commission 2015-2019 [E/CN.3/2015/39] agreed, at its forty-sixth session in 2015, that climate change statistics should be on the agenda of the Commission approximately every 5 years, with 2016 as the next occasion.

As such, the Report of the Secretary-General on Climate Change Statistics (E/CN.3/2016/15) was prepared by UNSD in its capacity as Secretariat of the Statistical Commission, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) for the forty-seventh session of the Statistical Commission to take place in New York from 8 to 11 March 2016 (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/). The report contains a discussion of climate change statistics and it highlights their relevance and need. It builds upon the Statistical Commission programme review on climate change at its fortieth session in 2009, and upon two previous related conferences on climate change and official statistics organized by UNSD. The

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report elaborates on the demand and supply of climate change statistics describing the situation around the world with particular emphasis on the constraints that developing countries face. Responding to increasing demand from countries, the present report summarizes the work on climate change statistics in UNSD, including methodological guidance, technical assistance and training, as it pertains to three key climate change relevant statistical domains, namely environment statistics, geospatial statistics and environmental-economic accounts. Complementarily, it describes the progress made in the UNECE work on climate change-related statistics and indicators.

Given the importance of climate change statistics and its relationship to environment statistics, the Environment Statistics Section of UNSD is developing a new knowledge platform dedicated to climate change statistics on its website (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/climatechange.html). It will include various documents, tools and resources such as:

(a) a fact sheet on Climate Change Statistics based on FDES/IPCC;

(b) detailed lists of environment statistics of the Basic Set of Environment Statistics (BSES) of the FDES needed to inform about climate change organized in the FDES/IPCC sequence;

(c) the Statistical Note prepared for the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on climate change and disaster risk reduction;

(d) relevant links to climate change-related indicators;

(e) a fact sheet about SDG13 and environment statistics;

(f) a set of methodological guidance tools about climate change statistics (including methodology sheets of the BSES related to climate change, and explanations and links to the IPCC and FAO emission methodologies);

(g) the CES Recommendations on Climate Change-related Statistics;

(h) presentations identifying the environment statistics needed to inform about climate change; (i) links to the two international climate change and statistics conferences; and

(j) an inventory of current related work on climate change statistics by partner organisations.

Several points for discussion outlined in Section VII of the report will be before the Statistical Commission during its forty-seventh session in March 2016 for the Commission to decide on the way forward in this very important and timely cross-cutting issue.

Compilation of Environmentally-related Questions in Censuses and Surveys, and of Specialized Environmental Surveys

In order to assist countries in the collection of environment statistics at the national/sub-national level, the Environment Statistics Section of UNSD is in the process of compiling national censuses or surveys that contain environmentally-related questions, as well as specialized environmental surveys (e.g., on wastewater treatment, water quality, air quality, energy consumption, etc.) from national statistical offices or other relevant institutions. Where appropriate, such censuses or surveys may also be referred to in the chapters of the Manual on the Basic on Environment Statistics currently being developed (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/FDES/Manual_BSES.htm).

Several countries have shared their national environmental surveys with UNSD and such submissions received from various countries will soon be available for reference on UNSD's website at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/envcensusesandsurveys.html. This exercise is viewed as an ongoing activity and is being undertaken so to assist countries requesting examples of such surveys for use at the national/sub-national level.

UNSD is welcoming further submissions of censuses and surveys from all countries in all official UN languages and other languages. Environmentally-related censuses and surveys, and specialized environmental surveys can be shared with the Environment Statistics Section of UNSD (contact: envstats@un.org) where they may then be made available at the above link.

The Basic Set of Environment Statistics

The Basic Set of Environment Statistics is a comprehensive, but not exhaustive, set of statistics designed to support countries developing national environment statistics programmes by helping them make decisions on priorities for statistical development. It is embedded in the FDES 2013 and consists of 458 individual statistics organized into the structure of the FDES (components, sub-components and topics). The Basic Set is divided into three tiers, based on the level of relevance, availability and methodological development of the statistics:

- Tier 1, corresponding to the Core Set of Environment Statistics, includes 100 statistics which are of high priority and relevance to most countries and have a sound methodological foundation. It is recommended that countries consider producing them in the short-term.
- Tier 2 includes 200 environment statistics which are of priority and relevance to most countries but require greater investment of time, resources or methodological development. It is recommended that countries consider producing them in the medium-term.
- Tier 3 includes 158 environment statistics which are either of lower priority or require significant methodological development. It is recommended that countries consider producing them in the long-term.

The complete Basic Set of Environment Statistics is available in both English and French at:
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/FDES/BasicSet.htm

The Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool

UNSD, in collaboration with the Expert Group on Environment Statistics, has developed the Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool (ESSAT) in support of the FDES 2013. The purpose of the ESSAT is to assist countries in both developing their environment statistics programmes and collecting their own data on the environment, and to assess the state of environment statistics and the needs for their development at the national level consistent with the scope of the FDES 2013.

In addition to its Introduction, the ESSAT consists of two parts, Part I: Institutional Dimension of Environment Statistics, and Part II: Statistics Level Assessment. Parts I and II are closely related and should ideally not be treated as independent of one another.

Part I focuses on the overall institutional and organizational structure of national statistics in the country and on specific information regarding environment statistics in terms of, *inter alia*, policy frameworks, mandates, institutional setup, organization, collaboration, resources, international cooperation and uses. Therefore, Part I contains much information which may be of greatest interest from a managerial or policy perspective.

Part II of the ESSAT is based on the Basic Set of Environment Statistics (BSES) of the FDES 2013. It follows the hierarchical structure of the FDES (in descending order: component, sub-component, statistical topic, statistic) and serves as a tool to assess the national relevance, importance, availability and sources of the individual statistics contained in the BSES. It also helps to identify relevant quantitative and qualitative data gaps, and to develop a plan for filling them in with a view to strengthen environment statistics according to national priorities, needs and available resources.

The ESSAT has been used extensively in training workshops on environment statistics in support of the implementation of the FDES in several regions of the world. Participants have found it to be very useful and a number of countries have already implemented the ESSAT at the national level.

The Introduction, Parts I and II of the ESSAT are available in both English and French at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/FDES/essat.htm. Other languages will follow soon.

Supporting the Implementation of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) in the ECOWAS Region (Lomé, Togo, 19-23 October 2015)

UNSD, in collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission, organized a sub-regional workshop for the ECOWAS Member States entitled "Environment Statistics in support of the implementation of the FDES 2013". It took place in Lomé, Togo from 19 to 23 October 2014. The Workshop gathered participants from the 15 ECOWAS member states, regional and international organizations (UNSD, UNECA, UNEP, UNDP, ECOWAS, Afristat and AfDB) and a regional statistical training institution, Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Statistique et d'Economie Appliquée (ENSEA). Two Ministers (Minister of Development Planning and Minister of Environment and Forest Resources) of the Government of Togo, as well as the Resident Representative of UNDP and Resident Coordinator of the UN System, Togo, gave opening statements at the Workshop.

The Workshop follows the United Nations Statistical Commission's endorsement in 2013 of the revised FDES 2013 as the framework for strengthening environment statistics programmes in countries. Two staff members of UNSD served as overall resource persons and made presentations on the FDES 2013 and related subjects.

The key purpose of this Workshop was to strengthen national capacities for the implementation of the FDES 2013, to provide statisticians and experts from ministries of environment (or equivalent institutions) with detailed knowledge and understanding of contemporary approaches to environment statistics, and to build on the existing work with the ECOWAS Commission.

The Workshop was very well received by the participants who found it extremely useful in providing them with guidance towards the implementation of the FDES 2013 in their countries. Although some countries are at different stages in the area of environment statistics and where basic issues such as data availability, data accessibility, adequate time series, as well as coordination of data collection and production exist at the national level, all participants expressed great interest in this field, and commended the opportunity to be brought together at the sub-regional level to discuss and share a common platform in the implementation of the FDES 2013. The Workshop also discussed the strengthening of the ECOWAS Regional Programme in Environment Statistics and the relationship between the ECOWAS Regional Set of Environmental Indicators and the Basic Set of Environment Statistics contained in the FDES 2013. All documents for the Workshop are available at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/unsd_TogoWorkshop.html.

UNSD looks forward to continuing its excellent collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission in supporting the implementation of the FDES 2013 in the ECOWAS region, as well as in assisting in strengthening the ECOWAS Regional Programme in Environment Statistics.

Visits to the National Institute of Statistics and Economic and Demographic Studies (INSEED) of Togo, the Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources of Togo, and the Resident Representative of UNDP and Resident Coordinator of the UN System in Togo

UNSD, represented by two staff members, coincided the timing of the Workshop on Environment Statistics in support of the Implementation of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region and the High Level Forum on Environment Statistics in Togo to visit the National Institute of Statistics and Economic and Demographic Studies (INSEED), the Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources and UNDP.

The aim of the visit to INSEED was to have a better idea of the state of statistical development in Togo and how statistics can be improved at the national level, especially through the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) support for the National Programme for Togo. For this purpose INSEED organized a meeting with different ministries and agencies involved with the production of statistics. A presentation on the National Statistical System (NSS) was made by the Director General of INSEED. The expectations of the Director General towards the UNDESA programme are: support of the strengthening of statistical coordination; support of the technical capacity building of the NSS; support of the opening of a statistical training centre; and technical support towards the improvement of the production and quality of statistical data. Through the UNDESA programme, INSEED made three requests concerning statistics.

The visit to the Ministry of the Environment and Forest Resources was brief. UNSD met the Secretary General of the Ministry. He welcomed UNSD for the organization of the Workshop on Environment Statistics in Togo and its participation in the High Level Forum on environment statistics. After he introduced the structure of the Ministry, the discussion then focused on the importance of environment statistics for the future SDG indicators and the challenges of their production in Togo, underlining the importance of both the Workshop on Environment Statistics and the High Level forum on Environment Statistics organized by the Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources.

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UNSD also paid a visit to the UNDP office to meet the Resident Representative of UNDP in Togo. The Resident Representative gave information about their related work with the Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources and presented the different environmental activities organized or financed by UNDP in Togo. These activities mainly concerned disaster management.

Celebration of World Statistics Day (Lomé, Togo, 20 October 2015)

UNSD coincided the timing of the Workshop on Environment Statistics in support of the Implementation of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) for the ECOWAS region with the celebration of World Statistics Day on 20 October 2015 in Lomé, Togo. The National Institute of Statistics and Economic and Demographic Studies (INSEED) of Togo organized a full day event in which various national institutions, students, donors and the public participated, and for some of the day, the participants of the regional Workshop also participated. The UN Secretary-General's and the Director of UNSD's speeches were communicated to the audience. The Minister of Development Planning gave the opening speech delivering a strong message about the importance of good quality and timely statistics, especially in light of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators. Several presentations on various statistical subjects, including a speech from the Director of INSEED, were delivered. An exhibition featuring the main statistical outputs, including publications, interactive databases and maps, was also notable. This well-organized event attracted a very large turnout and achieved public impact by being broadcasted on national television stations, as well as featured in daily newspapers.

Activities within the UN Development Account Project 2014-2015 "Supporting developing countries measure progress towards achieving a Green Economy"

The activities within the UN Development Account Project "Supporting developing countries measure progress towards achieving a Green Economy" have entered its second phase, the capacity building phase in the pilot countries. With two regional training workshops in the respective regions of the project (in Lima, Peru in April 2015 for countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Hanoi, Viet Nam in May 2015 for countries in Asia and the Pacific) conducted, technical assistance missions to pilot countries in both regions are well under way. The regional consultant conducted four two-week missions to the four pilot countries in Asia and the Pacific, namely Bhutan, Malaysia, Mongolia and Viet Nam from May to August 2015. Summary reports of these missions are available at the project's website at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/greeneconomy/MeetingDocuments.aspx?Lg=E&id=5.

Technical assistance missions to pilot countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have started with Chile in October 2015 and continuing with Peru in November to December 2015, Ecuador in January 2016 and Colombia in February 2016. The regional consultant is working closely with the relevant institutions and focal points in the pilot countries to prepare the technical assistance agendas, priorities as outlined by countries, and details of the technical aspects of the missions.

In the interim period, the UNSD team is conducting methodological work on drafting the metadata required for the reference list of green economy indicators of the project, which has been previously introduced to the countries in workshops and finalised with their comments and suggestions. This work is scheduled to end before the first closing regional workshop in February 2016.

Preparations are under way for the closing regional workshops of the project taking place in Ecuador in late February 2016 for the Latin America and the Caribbean region, and in Mongolia in late March 2016 for the Asia and the Pacific region. The final regional workshops will focus on "Strengthening basic statistics to support the Sustainable Development Goals". The workshops will serve to summarize the activities of the project and share experience among the pilot countries of the project. They will also serve to discuss ways to apply the knowledge gained in producing statistics and relevant indicators in the domains of environment, energy, agriculture and industry for the indicators proposed for measuring the targets for key Sustainable Development Goals.

All updates and new information will be posted on the project's website once available at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/greeneconomy/.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS:

FAO NEWS

Regional Workshop on the Estimation of Statistics on N inputs from Livestock Manure

(Contributed by Francesco N. Tubiello, FAO)

The Statistics Division (ESS), the Agricultural Production and Plant Production and Protection Division (AGP) and the Animal Production and Health Division (AGA) of FAO organized a regional workshop on the estimation of statistics on N inputs from livestock manure, as part of its capacity development efforts towards improved environmental economic statistics and in support of FAO Strategic Objective 2 on Sustainable Food and Agriculture.

The workshop was held in Kigali (Rwanda) on 30th November 2015 and its conclusions were reported at the 24th session of the African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS) (http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/ess-events/afcas/afcas24/en/), which took place in Kigali, Dec 1-4 2015. A total of 16 participants attended from nine African countries: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Rwanda and Uganda.

The workshop aimed at raising awareness on the importance of improved livestock manure data, including availability, storage and application as fertilizer. Manure plays an important role in sustaining agricultural production, particularly in extensive (low inputs) systems, where it provides a cheap, readily available resource that helps to replenish soil nutrients and maintain soil fertility. Appropriate knowledge and data on manure management, storage and application is needed, in order to minimize possible negative environmental impacts linked to nitrogen leaching and runoff and to greenhouse gas emissions. Despite the importance of manure for sustainable food and agriculture production, data on manure availability, storage management and application are currently scarce and scattered.

The workshop brought together high-level technical staff of Ministries of Agriculture, National Statistical Agencies and Ministries of Environment, to explore how to improve livestock manure statistics. The workshop provided an opportunity to exchange information on relevant national data processes, identify critical institutional and technical gaps and explore the role that FAO can play in support of its member countries' needs towards improved data for evidence-based decision making in agriculture, with relevance to the new 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, national GHG inventories, and the emergent System of Economic and Environmental Accounting for Agriculture (SEEA-Agriculture).

More information on the workshop agenda and presentations can be found at:
http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/ess-events/ninputs/en/

REGIONAL NEWS:

UN-ESCWA NEWS

Preparatory Meeting of the Arab Working Group on Sustainable Development Indicators (14-16 December 2015, Cairo, Egypt)

(Contributed by Wafa Aboul Hosn, Chief, Economic Statistics Section, Statistics Division, UN ESCWA)

In the context of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development the Statistics Division and the Sustainable Development Policies Division at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) are organizing a regional Preparatory Meeting of the Arab Working Group on Sustainable Development Indicators in cooperation with the League of Arab States (LAS), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative (AGEDI), the Islamic Education, Sciences and Culture Organization (ISESCO) and the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), during 14-16 December 2015 in Cairo, Egypt. The meeting aimed to discuss the Regional Sustainable Development goals and targets of the Proposal on Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development to: i) be aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; ii) review the proposed set of indicators and the outcomes of the second IAEG-SDG meeting in Bangkok, held during 26-28 October 2015; and iii) present the key findings of the Arab Sustainable Development Report on tracking progress and assessing sustainable development policies, based on previous experiences of the Arab region about sustainable development statistics, data collection and dissemination under the Arab working group on Sustainable Development Indicators.

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Survey on energy end-use in the transport sector

ESCWA implemented a project to strengthen statistical capacities in conducting surveys on energy consumption in the transport sector, supporting national statistical offices of Egypt, Jordan and Palestine. The project funded by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the Department for Foreign Development (DFID) consists of four main phases: preparation, data collection, data processing and data release stage. The project was completed in July 2015 with a full implementation of the survey in each beneficiary country. Each country was technically assisted during the implementation of the survey, from the selection of the methodology to dissemination of the results. The survey results showed that the end use consumption of petroleum products by the transport sector exceeds 50%. The results also enable the calculation of CO_2 emissions from the transport sector. National counterparts in transport, economy and environment have evidence to address the energy subsidies in transport that put a heavy load on government budgets and the adverse effects on the environment and people caused by, for example, air pollution and GHG emissions.

UNECE NEWS

(Contributed by Tiina Luige, Michael Nagy and Anu Peltola)

Joint UNECE/OECD Seminar on the Implementation of SEEA

A Joint UNECE/OECD Seminar on the Implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) was held in Geneva on 14-15 October 2015. It was jointly organized with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and an organizing committee with members from Australia, Canada, Kyrgyzstan, Netherlands, Sweden and the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat). The seminar was organized in accordance with the decision of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in April 2014 to organize such a seminar, following the request of Member States to provide a forum to share experiences on the SEEA implementation.

The main objective of the seminar was to share experience and knowledge on the implementation of SEEA and its use for various policy needs. Furthermore, the seminar provided a forum to present and discuss the activities of international organizations related to the implementation of SEEA, and contribute to their coordination. The seminar brought together 80 participants from 37 different countries: experts and managers of environmental-economic accounts from national statistical offices (NSOs) and other national agencies, international organizations, NGOs and academia.

The seminar discussed policy uses, analytical tools and the implementation of SEEA and emerging issues, such as Ecosystem Accounting and the System of Environmental Economic Accounting for Agriculture (SEEA AGRI). The participants of the seminar made the following recommendations for future work for the UNECE Statistical Division to take into account:

a) Continue the exchange of best practices and the discussion on conceptual and practical issues related to SEEA, including on the use of SEEA.
b) Joint UNECE/OECD seminars on the implementation of SEEA should continue to allow for this exchange, advance SEEA implementation and discuss coordination issues among international organizations active in the SEEA work in the UNECE region. These seminars may also explore ways to promote the use of SEEA and the integration of social data. These seminars will be complementary to other international initiatives such as the London Group.
c) A regional UNECE implementation strategy will be developed, which identifies implementation priorities for groups of countries and which will allow a common implementation approach. Existing mechanisms should be used as far as possible to support capacity building.
d) The existing helpdesk of UNSD could be used and, if needed, further strengthened with an expanded network of experts.
e) An inventory of international activities in the UNECE region should be developed and maintained in close cooperation with international organizations.

All presentations, papers and the final report of the seminar are available on the meeting website at: http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=37910#/.

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Training Course for Energy Accounts – "getting hands dirty with data"

The training course for Energy Accounts was organised by Statistics Norway and the European Free Trade Association in collaboration with UNECE and was hosted by the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus (Belstat) in Minsk on 20-22 October 2015. The main objective was to gain hands-on experience of using countries' own data reported to the International Energy Agency (IEA) for physical SEEA Energy Accounts.

In total, 24 experts working with energy statistics or with supply and use tables (SUTs) from National Accounts from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan attended the training course.

At the end of the course for each country a pilot account and a draft roadmap for further implementation, gap filling and improvement of data quality was available. Participants suggested having similar expert trainings also for other SEEA domains.

Climate Change-Related Statistics – Expert Forum and Task Forces

New needs for climate change-related statistics of high political importance are arising from global initiatives, in particular from Global Climate Agreements and changes expected from the Conference of Parties 21 (COP21), Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction.

UNECE organized an Expert Forum for producers and users of climate change-related statistics in Geneva on 2□3 September 2015, with the related UNECE Steering Group (led by Norway). In total, 84 participants attended the meeting from 36 countries and 18 international organizations representing NSOs, environment agencies and ministries, meteorological services, disaster risk agencies, research institutes and international organizations.

The participants reconfirmed the *CES Recommendations on climate change-related statistics* (www.unece.org/publications/ces_climatechange.html) and the need for NSOs' actions to implement those recommendations. While countries presented many good practices at the Expert Forum, they also requested for support by preparing a road map with a tool allowing prioritization of national actions to implement the *CES Recommendations*. A number of countries asked for capacity building to meet the increasing demands for climate-relevant data.

The Expert Forum emphasized the central role of official statistics in relation to the COP21 and high quality reporting to the UNFCCC. In addition to delivering data for emission inventories, official statistics should be used much more widely as baseline data for emission projections and for reporting on national circumstances, climate change adaptation and mitigation, technological exchange, financial resources and education.

Two sessions were dedicated to discussing the work of UNECE Task Forces. A Task Force (led by Italy) is developing an internationally comparable set of key climate change-related indicators using the SEEA-Central Framework, the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) and other statistical frameworks as a source of information. The work also takes into account the relevant indicators for the monitoring of progress towards SDGs. A draft indicator set will be discussed in 2016.

A session on emerging issues focused on the measurement of extreme events and disasters. UNECE launched work in this area, and a Task Force (led by Italy) is identifying practical steps for NSOs to better support disaster management and risk reduction. The work is done in close collaboration with the ESCAP Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics and will feed into the monitoring of the Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction. A final report is expected in 2017.

All presentations, papers and the final report of the Forum are available on the meeting website at:
http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=37898#/ .

EUROSTAT NEWS

(Contributed by Anton Steurer, Eurostat)

An overview of Eurostat activities on environmental statistics, environmental accounts and sustainable development indicators can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/environment/overview. The following is a summary of developments in the last 6 months.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Eurostat is an observer in the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG monitoring (IAEG-SDG). In this role Eurostat participated in the two meetings of the group in June and October 2015 and contributed to the open consultation on draft indicator lists in August-September. Eurostat coordinated a common position of the European Union members of the IAEG-SDG, with input from the other EU Members States and European Commission services. An ad hoc expert meeting on 7 October was organised for this purpose. Eurostat also set up a dedicated "SDG monitoring" portal in its CROS platform, open to members of the European Statistical System, to exchange ideas on the process to define the SDG monitoring framework.

Environmental statistics

As regards water statistics, the results of the 2014 OECD/Eurostat Joint Questionnaire on Inland Waters is now online at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database and explained in an article (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Water_statistics). Regional water data (for administrative regions (NUTS) and river basin districts) are available as well.

As regards forest statistics, preliminary data on the production and trade in wood products in 2014 were collected through the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire and published (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/forestry/data/database) in July. The final data will be published by the end of November 2015.

SEEA environmental accounts

Eurostat is running the 2015 data collections on environmental taxes, economy-wide material flow accounts, air emission accounts, environmental goods and services sector accounts, environmental protection expenditure accounts and physical energy flow accounts. All these data collections are annual and the first three are mandatory for EU Member States. The latter three will become mandatory in 2017. Eurostat will publish the data results, as well as articles and other material between December 2015 and April 2016, depending on the accounts.

In addition, Eurostat launched a pilot data collection on environmental subsidies and other transfers and on forest accounts. The pilot data collection on environmental subsidies will test the guidelines (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-manuals-and-guidelines/-/KS-GQ-15-005-EN-N) and questionnaire (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1798247/6191541/Environmental+taxes+by+economic+activities+questionnaire) issued in the first half of 2015. The pilot on forest accounts covers physical and monetary accounts for land, timber, supply and use of products for 2013. The economic aggregates collected continue the existing time series (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/forestry/data/database) (since 1986) and will be published by the end of November 2015. A task force will analyse the results in March 2016 and finalise the set of accounts.

A new version of the PEFA builder was made available as made available for countries wishing to use it. This tool allows countries to produce physical energy flow accounts on the basis on energy statistics.

Eurostat updated the Manual for Air Emissions Accounts 2015 (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1798247/6191529/DRAFT-Manual-for-Air-Emissions-Accounts-%282015-edition%29.doc) from the previous edition dating from 2009. Many environmental accounts handbooks and questionnaires are available at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/environment/methodology.

Eurostat participated in the CES steering group on climate change-related statistics (CCRS), in the Expert Forum for producers and users of CCRS and in the CES task force on CCRS which is working towards a set of key CCR statistics and indicators.

Eurostat facilitated training courses on environmental statistics and SEEA for European compilers. Material from past courses is available at: https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/6ade1ca8-6a06-44bd-bff0-498217d0ec05. The following courses are planned for 2016 (no dates programmed yet): waste statistics, water statistics, environmental goods and services sector accounts, environmental protection expenditure accounts and physical energy flow accounts.

Revision of the EEA Core Set of Indicators

(Contributed by Roberta Pignatelli, European Environment Agency)

The EEA currently maintains 128 indicators across 14 themes[1] and makes them available via the EEA website at: www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/indicators. By selecting indicators from the different themes, a 37 strong Core Set of Indicators (CSI) was identified in 2004. The CSI aims to prioritise improvements in the quality and coverage of data flows, streamline contributions to other indicator initiatives in Europe and beyond, and provide a manageable and stable basis for indicator-based assessments of progress against environmental policy priorities. The establishment and development of the CSI was guided by the need to identify a small number of policy-relevant indicators that are stable, but not static, and that give answers to selected priority policy questions. The CSI 2004 covered six environmental themes (air pollution and ozone depletion, climate change, waste, water, biodiversity, and terrestrial environment) and four sectors (agriculture, energy, transport and fisheries), all addressing EU policy priorities.

In 2013 a revision of this set was carried out with the aim of producing a more balanced indicator set that was better aligned with current policy priorities and the EEA's work programme. The revised CSI comprises 42 indicators across six thematic areas, which correspond to priority themes for stronger environmental policy implementation, i.e. air pollution, transport and noise; climate change and energy; freshwater resources; marine and maritime; biodiversity and ecosystems; and waste and resources (each including seven indicators).

The revision aimed to keep the CSI stable, but not static, by retaining existing CSI indicators of sufficient relevance and quality. New indicators were also chosen, primarily from existing EEA indicator sets. The revision resulted in the removal of seven indicators from the previous core set. There are several reasons for this: the selection of alternative indicators that better relate to current policy priorities and the removal of indicators no longer maintained by the EEA (such as the two agri-environment indicators now published by Eurostat). Balancing the CSI across themes has led to a reduction in the number of energy indicators, although these indicators are still published by the EEA as thematic indicators.

The need to adjust the CSI to new policy demands has led to the integration of a longer term perspective and the inclusion of indicators under development that will become operational between 2014 and 2018. This provides scope for innovation and should enable the CSI to better reflect new policy demands. The data implications arising from these proposals are expected to be minimal for countries. Data flows for the CSI will either come from established processes or from recent policy initiatives e.g. the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Of the 42 indicators, 27 are already available on the EEA website. Those created or updated more recently include Emissions of the main air pollutants in Europe (CSI 040); Exposure of ecosystems to acidification, eutrophication and ozone (CSI 005); Global and European temperatures (CSI 012); Overview of European energy system (CSI 045); Production, sales and emissions of fluorinated greenhouse gases (CSI 044); Oxygen consuming substances in rivers (CSI 019); Nutrients in freshwater (CSI 020); Nutrients in transitional, coastal and marine waters (CSI 021); Chlorophyll in transitional, coastal and marine waters (CSI 023); Hazardous substances in marine organisms (CSI 049); Status of marine fish stocks (CSI 032); Fishing fleet pressure (CSI 034); Abundance and distribution of selected species (CSI 050); Water generation (CSI 041); Household and environmental pressure intensity (CSI 043) and Energy intensity (CSI 028). All the others will be produced or updated between now and 2018, in compliance with the EEA Multi-Annual Work Programme (2014-2018).

[1] The themes addressed include Air pollution (5 indicators), Biodiversity (26 indicators), Climate change (45 indicators), Coasts and seas (6 indicators), Energy (11 indicators), Environmental scenarios (2 indicators), Fisheries (2 indicators), Green economy (1 indicator), Household consumption (1 indicator), Land use (1 indicator), Soil (1 indicator), Transport (17 indicators), Waste and material resources (2 indicators) and Water (8 indicators).

UNECA NEWS

Economic Report on Africa 2016 – Greening Africa's Industrialization

(Contributed by Katalin Bokor, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa)

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is currently working on its flagship publication, the Economic Report on Africa 2016 – Greening Africa's Industrialization. Green industrialization is "competitive and highly productive industrialisation that fully internalises environmental costs through clean, low waste, resource efficient and low carbon production processes or methods, generates employment and contributes to improved human well-being, poverty eradication, and social equity." The objective of this study is to provide evidence-based reference material for policymakers and other stakeholders on greening Africa's industrialisation to achieve inclusive and sustainable structural transformation in the continent. Specifically the study will:

i) provide a robust assessment of Africa's industrial development, the potential, driving factors, trends and measures necessary to greening the region's industrialisation process;

ii) identify and analyse challenges and opportunities, as well as enablers for greening Africa's industrialisation; and

iii) examine and proffer a robust package of policy options and recommendations towards greening Africa's industrialisation.

The study will include case studies on Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa and Tunisia. To come up with solid analysis and policy recommendations, the study and the Report have to rely on extensive statistical data, especially those related to environment statistics. For this purpose, statistical systems and frameworks, such as the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), are playing an important role for setting the international statistical standard and ensuring the comparability across countries.

ECOWAS Plan Activities for 2016 in Environment Statistics

(Contributed by Gbogboto Musa, Economic Community of West African States)

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been working in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and other development partners on environment statistics in support of the implementation of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) in the ECOWAS region. For the past years many workshops/supports have been organized to build national capacities in environment statistics and, more recently, to foster the implementation of FDES 2013.

In the coming year 2016, the ECOWAS Commission will continue to collaborate with UNSD and other development partners like AfDB, ECA, AFRISTAT, UNEP and UNDP to implement the FDES 2013. Focus for this year will be on supporting the establishment of National Committees and data collection on environment statistics in Member States. The ECOWAS Commission hopes to organize further regional training on the FDES 2013 to harmonize the production of ECOWAS Core Environmental Indicators and the environmentally-related Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) indicators.

Progress in Implementing the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) in COMESA Member states[2]

(Contributed by Themba Munalula, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa)

With a view to implement environment statistics which have much data gaps in this emerging area and to strengthen those statistics that already exist, a regional kick off workshop was held in Mauritius from 26 to 29 January 2015. It was organized jointly by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

Prior to the Mauritius Workshop, an assessment carried out by COMESA in 2014 revealed several data gaps and a lack of adequate capacity to produce environment statistics in member countries. A roadmap was therefore formulated with a view to technically assist countries in implementing the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) and strengthening the same in countries that have already some work in this area.

[2] Inputs were also provided by Anand Sookun, COMESA Environment Statistics Consultant, Manasa Mviriri, Head of Environment Statistics ZIMSTAT, Zimbabwe and Doreen Tembo, Head of Environment Statistics, Central Statistical Office, Zambia

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Several countries expressed their interest to start the adoption process for FDES 2013. During the year 2015, Zimbabwe and Zambia were among the first countries in the COMESA region to initiate the process. Zambia and Zimbabwe benefitted from the funding under the European Union's Regional Integration Support Mechanism (RISM)[3] managed by COMESA Secretariat.

FDES in Zambia

The implementation of the FDES 2013 in Zambia was initiated by a national kick off workshop where all the relevant stakeholders were invited to participate. Most of the invited Ministries, departments and other stakeholders were present. The main objectives of the workshop were to build capacity of the stakeholders and the coordinating institutions that were the Central Statistical Office (CSO) and the Ministry of Environment, and also to assess the data availability.

The Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool (ESSAT), which is a supporting tool of the FDES 2013, was used to assess the data,. After presenting the FDES 2013 components to the participants, break-out sessions were held, followed by discussion in plenary. Stakeholders presented their mandates and the data available. Interestingly, the stakeholders displayed ample interest and presented adequate data availability for initiating the FDES 2013.

Agreements were reached between the FDES implementation coordinators and the national stakeholders for data sharing. A work plan was also established for data collection, report preparation and dissemination which are scheduled for the end of the first quarter of 2016. The table below summarizes the results obtained from the ESSAT.

Summary of assessments of environment statistics availability in Zambia, based on FDES 2013

		Number of available statistics		
		Core set	**Not core set**	**Total**
Component 1:	Environmental conditions and quality	15	58	73
Component 2:	Environmental resources and their use	13	30	43
Component 3:	Residuals	10	8	18
Component 4:	Extreme events and disasters	4	30	34
Component 5:	Human settlements and environmental health	6	0	6
Component 6:	Environmental protection, management and engagement	1	20	21
Total		**49**	**146**	**195**

The challenge of collecting and centralizing the data remains. These data, though available, are scattered among the different departments within Ministries. Some of them are incomplete, for instance across time. As an initial step, the readily available data will be collected with specifically devised templates for sub-components and topics of the FDES 2013. At a later phase, the detailed data sets will be added

[3] The Regional Integration Support Mechanism (RISM) provides support to COMESA Fund Member States to enable them make the necessary fiscal and economic adjustments that inherently accompany the implementation of regional integration commitments. The RISM programme has Euro 111 million of which 73.4 has been committed. Approval of Euro 9 million for the 6th Call for submissions was granted at the COMESA Fund meeting in November 2015 and countries are expected to prepare project documents for submission. For the 6th Call project proposals have to be prepared and submitted before May 2016. The next Call (7th Call) for Submissions is set to be launched by April 2016 and makes available Euro 13 million to eligible Member States.

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FDES in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is at an advanced stage towards the implementation of FDES 2013 which is being supported by the COMESA Secretariat. The FDES 2013 is poised to address the increasing demand for environmental information in support of integrated and sustainable policies and programmes. The FDES 2013 implementation programme also seeks to build the capacity of institutions involved in the production of environment statistics through the provision of technical assistance and necessary equipment required to produce the statistics. Some institutions have already received the office equipment in September 2015.

The landmark stages of the programme implementation were the formation of the task team (composed mainly of the National Environment Statistics Committee members); the conducting of working group meetings and workshops for prioritization of indicators; national environmental data collection and collation exercise (almost all the data sets required to be included in the report are available); and report production. Hence, the country is at report production stage. In December 2015, the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) will convene a stakeholders' workshop to review and finalize the draft Environment Statistics report and train environment statistics producers on the production of geo-spatial information. All the trainings and workshop facilitations are done by some Committee members.

Summary of assessments of environment statistics availability in Zimbabwe, based on FDES 2013

		Number of available statistics		
		Core set	**Not core set**	**Total**
Component 1:	Environmental conditions and quality	53	20	73
Component 2:	Environmental resources and their use	27	16	43
Component 3:	Residuals	12	6	18
Component 4:	Extreme events and disasters	28	6	34
Component 5:	Human settlements and environmental health	5	3	8
Component 6:	Environmental protection, management and engagement	20	1	21
Total		**145**	**52**	**197**

Future work

The model presented by the two countries is the basic roadmap that is being rolled out in COMESA countries. On its part, COMESA Secretariat will continue to coordinate and facilitate technical assistance to Member states.

The EAC/UNSD Project on "Supporting Member States in Developing and Strengthening Environment Statistics and Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting for Improved Monitoring of Sustainable Development"

(Contributed by Robert Maate and Marco Gambamala, East African Community (EAC))

A sub-regional workshop on "Environment Statistics in support of the Implementation of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013)" was organized in Arusha, Tanzania by UNSD in collaboration with the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat and the National Bureau of Statistics of the United Republic of Tanzania, who provided on-ground support, from 6 to 10 July 2015. Several other international and inter-governmental organizations participated in the Workshop, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

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One of the main recommendations made by this workshop was for the EAC Secretariat to establish a regional working group on environment statistics, as this regional body would work on modalities for harmonization of environment statistics in a bid to obtain regionally comparable statistical indicators. The Working Group should be composed of the ministry responsible for environment and the national Statistics Office in each Partner State.

The Meeting further recommended that the EAC Partner States should establish the national Working Group on environment statistics comprising of data producers and suppliers. The work group should regularly engage with the data users and domesticate the FDES among others. These recommendations were presented by the EAC Secretariat and discussed during the Sectoral Committee meeting in Dar es Salaam, November 2015. They were further adopted by the Sectoral Council on Finance and Economic Affairs (SCFEA) that met in December 2015.

In implementing the decisions of the SCFEA, the EAC Secretariat will develop terms of reference for regional and national technical working groups on environment statistics and forward them to the Partner States by February 2016; establish a regional working group on environmental statistics; and provide modalities for capacity building in environment statistics in the Partner States. On the other hand, the EAC Partner States will establish national technical working groups on environment statistics comprising of data producers and suppliers.

ECLAC NEWS

Activities in Latin America and the Caribbean – Development Account Project on Environmental Accounting, SEEA Course, SEEA Translation and more

(Contributed by Birgit Altmann, Statistics Division, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean)

In the framework of the UN Development Account Programme, 9th Tranche, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) received the approval for a project named "Strengthening statistical capacities for building macroeconomic and sustainable development indicators in Latin America, the Caribbean and Asian-Pacific countries". The project, led by ECLAC, is carried out in close collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) as well as UNSD, and aims at strengthening the implementation of the System of National Accounts (SNA) 2008 and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) 2012 in 10 pilot countries through activities (workshops, seminars, training, technical assistance, south-south cooperation) that will be developed during the period 2015-2017.

Six pilot countries are located in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) namely Brazil, Colombia, Curacao, Jamaica, Paraguay and Uruguay. In the first phase of the project, week-long evaluation missions are conducted to evaluate the current situation regarding the implementation of the SNA 2008 and the SEEA 2012, and to plan the upcoming activities based on the mission results. With respect to environmental accounting, the six pilot countries are at quite different levels regarding implementation – ranging from Colombia, one of the most advanced countries in LAC, to countries that have not yet seen any activities in this area. Therefore, the activities now underway also differ substantially depending on countries. For instance, in Colombia a detailed revision of the energy account will be conducted; Jamaica, Uruguay and Paraguay will receive capacity building and technical assistance for the compilation of the first priority accounts; and Brazil, is considering organizing a specific SEEA-course in Portuguese including the translation of material. In addition to activities in the pilot countries, a regional workshop is planned for the first half of 2016 in order to share experiences and best-practices with non-pilot countries.

In the first half of 2015, ECLAC together with UNSD and GIZ organized a regional course on the SEEA 2012. The online phase consisted of five modules:

- Introduction to the SEEA
- Accounting for physical flows
- Accounting for environmental assets
- Environmental activity accounts, combined presentations and indicators
- Subsystems, applications and extensions

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Over 70 participants from 16 countries in the LAC region followed the eight week online phase during the months of April to June. In July, a week-long in-person phase took place in Santiago, Chile with a subset of 24 participants with the aim to deepen the knowledge acquired in the online phase. Thus the main focus during the week was on strengthening technical capacities by means of presentations and in-depths exercises. In addition, participants discussed during the last day main challenges related to the SEEA implementation and possible strategies to overcome these obstacles. National action plans marked the end of this well-received capacity building week.

During the month of October 2015, the last issues concerning the translation of the SEEA 2012 Central Framework into Spanish were resolved. The revision of a preliminary translated version was conducted by ECLAC, who also supervised an editorial committee comprised of environmental accounting experts in the region. The Spanish version of the SEEA will soon be printed.

At present, ECLAC is undertaking research to update the publication "State of the situation of environmental statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2008: progress, challenges and perspectives". For this purpose, a survey has been sent out to the National Statistical Offices as well as Ministries of Environment with questions concerning the respective programmes on environmental statistics including coverage and challenges, measurement of environmental targets within the Sustainable Development Goals and environmental accounting. ECLAC is hoping for a high response rate in order to allow for a comprehensive overview regarding the development of environmental statistics in the region, with the goal to plan future projects and activities according to the most pressing needs of the region as well as individual countries. The publication is sought to be published during the first half of 2016.

CARICOM NEWS

CARICOM Establishes Regional Technical Working Group in Environment Statistics

(Contributed by Philomen Harrison, CARICOM Secretariat)

The establishment of a Technical Working Group (TWG) in Environment Statistics was a key achievement of the work put in place in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in 2015. The TWG aims to sustain the strengthening of statistical capacity in environment statistics. The recommendation to establish the TWG came out of the CARICOM Workshop on Environment Statistics held in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 2014. The Draft Terms of Reference (TOR) of the TWG was prepared by the Secretariat and were circulated to member counties for feedback. The next steps included preparatory work for the first meeting of the TWG which took place during the fourth quarter of this year. The recommendations of the first TWG are being prepared and will be disseminated in early January 2016.

In addition to the establishment of the TWG, CARICOM also focuses on the commencement of a new round of data collection and compilation for the CARICOM Fourth Regional Environment Statistics Report. As of October 2015, ten (10) countries have submitted data in the table formats provided. Data were also received from the Caribbean Tourism Organisation for the Tourism theme.

The CARICOM Secretariat is also undertaking an assessment of the data collected in the area of Environment Statistics over the years in order to evaluate the impact of relevant capacity building activities. The first draft of the assessment comprised an analysis of each thematic area of Environment Statistics by examining the data submitted by countries, the data gaps, the sources of data and the capacity building activities carried out regionally and in-country. The objectives of this assessment, as outlined in the 2014/2015 Work Plan, were to help identify countries and thematic areas for the delivery of technical assistance/attachment programmes in order to strengthen countries' capacity and reduce the data gaps.

The Secretariat is also following-up on an inter-agency technical assistance mission, which took place in Grenada in May 2015, based on a request received at the workshop in 2014.

The European Union (EU) continues to provide support to the Secretariat to assist in the development of this area of statistics.

ESCAP NEWS

Improving Environment Statistics and Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting in Asia and the Pacific

(Contributed by UN ESCAP Pacific Office, SIAP and Statistics Division)

In-country assistance

Developing a strategy for improving environment statistics, including SEEA implementation, in a country must be driven by national priorities, national data availability and the capacity to compile statistics and use them for policy analysis. ESCAP is working with countries in the Asia-Pacific region to support national assessments on the priorities, constraints and capacity to implement the SEEA. ESCAP is providing this assistance through two development account projects, following a four-stage approach toward national improvement of environment statistics:

(1) Assessment of environment policy priorities, statistical infrastructure, data availability and human resource capacity;

(2) Development of draft national action plans for environment statistics, which detail the institutional framework, training needs and priority actions for national SEEA implementation;

(3) Provision of technical assistance for compiling and using statistics for one priority sector identified in the national action plan; and

(4) Drafting of a national case study on SEEA implementation.

This year national assessments of the Federated States of Micronesia, Nepal, Maldives and Palau were completed, and targeted technical assistance on water statistics was provided in Samoa. ESCAP plans to continue supporting national assessments and providing technical assistance.

Training

ESCAP's Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) is providing basic training on environment statistics on a regular basis. SIAP is currently collaborating with UNSD and GTZ in delivering a "blended" regional course on SEEA, i.e., an online course in 2015 followed by a face-to-face course in the first quarter of 2016. SIAP plans to integrate this course in its regular programme. In addition, a training course on the SEEA will be organized for the Small Island Developing States in the Asia-Pacific region in the first quarter of 2016.

UNEP Live SDG Portal

(Contributed by UNEP)

UNEP Live (http://uneplive.unep.org/) is a knowledge management platform that aims to support assessment processes through the provision of substantiated, contextualized knowledge. Facilitating the exchange and sharing of latest data, information, scientific findings and knowledge amongst member countries, research networks, communities of practice, indigenous peoples and society, enables UNEP to keep the environment and emerging issues under review.

A recent addition to the platform has been the ***SDG Portal*** (uneplive.unep.org/portal#) which includes a smart web intelligence solution for the environment for analyzing and interlinking global environmental indicators and communication flows.

It analyzes both individual and relevant public opinion trends on air quality, biodiversity and climate change from news channels, social media, online publications, global companies, environmental organizations, partners and stakeholders. Web intelligence technologies align and compare environmental indicators from structured sources with relevant documents and postings from these online sources. This facilitates the capture of stakeholder perceptions on sustainability issues in real time.

The platform also shows the relationship between SDG goals and targets. Once countries collect data for SDG indicators, the portal will include maps of data availability across the globe for these indicators.

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Another feature available on the SDG Portal is SDG ontologies. This enhances discoverability of data through the SDG Interface Ontology (SDGIO). UNEP, in collaboration with experts in the field of ontology, is building an SDGIO so that entities relevant to the SDGs can be logically represented, defined, interrelated, and linked to the corresponding terminology in glossaries and resources such as the UN System Data Catalogue and SDG Innovation platform.

The SDG Portal has the capability to provide effective ways to retrieve the most relevant content from comprehensive environmental knowledge archives. It currently allows users to spot geographic patterns, identify shifts in opinions on environmental matters, and track the influence of stakeholders on a given public discussion. This kind of information is highly valuable to decision makers and supports efforts to increase environmental literacy. More information is available at: http://www.unep.org/newscentre/Default.aspx?DocumentID=26844&ArticleID=35452&l=en

Convene, Converge, Collaborate. A Latin American and the Caribbean perspective on the Second Eye on Earth Summit

(Contributed by UNEP-ROLAC)

The second Eye on Earth Summit (EoE) was convened on 6-8 October 2015 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. With 5 plenaries, 26 breakout sessions, 19 side events, and around 760 participants from over 100 countries, the EoE Summit offered a very rich, interesting and fully-packed programme.

Although the number of speakers and delegates from Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) was relatively small, their contribution to the overall discussion and active participation in the building of a global Eye on Earth community was critical. In this article, a summary of the main findings of two side events co-organized by the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) along with some key challenges and prospects emerged from the discussions held during those events are provided.

UNEP ROLAC and its sister office, the Regional Office for North America (RONA) organized a side event about the regional (and sub-regional) issues facing the transition and the enabling conditions required to fully capitalize on the data revolution. Rodrigo Barriga-Vargas, Secretary-General of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH) and Ivan DeLoatch, Executive Director of the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) delivered the session with an overview on how environmental data and related information are made accessible, shared and used to inform policy and decision making in the two regions. Both speakers' speeches focused on the need to promote processes to develop a closer and more interactive engagement with users, also taking advantage of the pervasive use of new information and communications technologies in today's digital society.

According to the speakers, despite the existing socioeconomic differences between different countries in the two regions, the Americas have demonstrated to have the scientific and technological background needed to support major environmental progress through effective data and monitoring systems. The intense activity around this transition is a central aspect of the science-policy interface and for informed decision-making for sustainable development. The flexible integration of data systems, in terms of both infrastructure and networking can support fit-for-purpose monitoring, early warning, assessments and reporting, decision-support, community awareness and empowerment, grounded in evidence-based management principles.

Another side event relevant for LAC was organized by the GeoSUR Programme and UNEP ROLAC. This side event aimed at presenting the GeoSUR programme, a regional initiative led by spatial data producers in LAC to implement a regional geospatial network and to help establish the basis of a spatial data infrastructure in the region.

This side event was conceived to introduce the general structure of GeoSUR and the coordinating role of PAIGH and CAF, the Development Bank of Latin America in the implementation of this initiative. The three speakers for this event (Rodrigo Barriga, PAIGH Secretary-General, Mr. Eric Van Praag, ESRI USA and former CAF director for data and information; Ms. Viviana Fernandez, Ministry of Environment, Uruguay) presented some concrete examples of activities conducted in the frame of GeoSUR in South America and the existing links with other cooperation networks, notably the Joint Action Plan for the development of geospatial data infrastructure in the Americas.

The interventions and discussions held at both events provided an interesting perspective about how geospatial data complemented by statistical information can result in a powerful tool to provide the environment statistics needed for the compilation of the indicators related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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In this regard, a major challenge in the LAC region is to make such information available in a format and scale readily usable for SDGs reporting. Likewise, the importance to disseminate and make the data accessible to all stakeholders, notably the local communities, the general public and the NGOs working on the ground at local level, is recognized.

Although most of the countries in the LAC region still need to change or adapt their national policies and programmes to fully exploit the opportunities provided by the data revolution, this process is already influencing their roles in and perspectives on how environmental information is owned, managed, shared and accessed in the region.

More information on the Summit agenda and the GeoSUR programme are available at: http://www.eoesummit.org and http://www.geosur.info/geosur/index.php/en/

COUNTRY NEWS

Environment Statistics Technical Assistance Mission to Brazil

(Contributed by Kristina Taboulchanas, ECLAC Brazil)

The mission was requested by Brazil, and was jointly organized by UNSD and ECLAC's National Office of Brazil, in collaboration with the Environment Ministry (MMA) and the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). The mission consisted of meetings and discussions to identify national needs and priorities, and to prepare a capacity building activity planned for 2016.

The planned national training workshop will cover conceptual and methodological aspects of environment statistics and indicators, based on the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) and related tools. The training is sought in support of Brazil's National Environment Statistics System currently being developed through a cooperation agreement between the Ministry of the Environment and the IBGE.

Substantive activities carried out jointly by UNSD, UNECLAC and the national counterparts MMA and IBGE took place in the Ministry of the Environment building, including:

a) Planning of technical activities in support of the development of a National Environment Statistics System with the Environment Ministry and IBGE experts and supervisors;

b) A technical meeting where key presentations were delivered and discussions was held to discuss specific training needs and priorities in the context of national policy making, and to consider the environmentally-related SDG targets and indicators. The meeting was attended by 32 national representatives of different departments and institutions that are users and producers of environment data and statistics at the federal level in Brazil.

c) Discussion of the contents, sequence and modality of the training workshop for 2016 in preparation of a draft course proposal; and

d) Meetings with the Environmental Ministry's authorities in Brasilia, where national high level support was reinforced.

Implementation of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) in Burkina Faso

(Contributed by Paul Bombiri, Ministry of Environment and Fishery Resources and Souleymane Ouedraogo, National Institute of Statistics and Demography, Burkina Faso)

The general state of the environment of Burkina Faso, a Sahelian country of West Africa with an area of 273,187 km^2, is subject to many changes. These changes are due to the combined effects of various driving forces, pressures and impacts of natural phenomena and human activities (agriculture and expansive livestock farming). The climate is characterized by a chronic lack of rainfall and a significant rise in average temperatures, which exacerbate land and biological resources degradation, and water stress. Population growth, the expansion of the land dedicated to agriculture and of urban areas, climate change, and the drying of wetlands are all threats to the preservation of environmental resources (such as forest, wildlife and fish). The use of biomass as the main source of energy for households implies a strong consumption of timber resources, leading to a further deterioration of vegetative cover and soil fertility, and the destruction of primary carbon sequestration sources.

The main environmental concerns are, among others, sustainable land management, integrated water resources management, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, preservation and enhancement of biological resources.

In order to have reliable data, statistics and indicators to enable appropriate and informed decisions making, the Government has taken significant institutional measures to improve the production of environment statistics at the national and sectoral level. The improvement process was done in four steps.

Step 1: Creation of a Directorate General of Sectorial Studies and Statistics within the Ministry responsible for the environment. The main tasks of the Directorate are: planning activities (strategical and operational); formulating policies and programmes; monitoring, evaluating and capitalizing projects and programmes; and collecting, processing and disseminating environmental statistics.

Step 2: Establishment of a technical committee. An inter-ministerial technical committee already existed since 2009 as part of the development of the Environment Statistics Yearbook. Its objectives, which were confined to the collection and compilation of data to publish in the statistical yearbook, were extended to the review and validation of the methodological aspects of the data published in the Environment Statistics Yearbook and in the Environment Dashboard. The inter-ministerial technical committee is made up of representatives from the technical departments of the ministries producing environment statistics. The objective of the establishment of this committee is to strengthen the collaboration between the technical structures producing data.

Step 3: Making a diagnosis of the environment statistics information system. In seeking to improve environmental statistics, a diagnosis of the environment statistics information system was conducted in December 2012. This study identified the strengths and weaknesses of the system and proposed a short, medium and long term action plan to improve the statistical production and to strengthen the stakeholders' capacities. The following major improvements were made:

At the institutional level: definition of a schema of data flows from the decentralized to the centralized level; designation of the directorate of sectoral statistics of the Ministry in charge of the environment responsible for the organisation of the environmental statistics collection, processing and dissemination.

At the technical level: the FDES 2013 has been proposed as the framework to organize environment statistics and was adopted by the main institutions producing environment statistics data. Thus, the Environment Statistics Yearbook has been restructured according to the FDES 2013. The indicators of the Environmental Dashboard built on the Driving force-Pressure-State-Impact-Response (DPSIR) model have been revised to reflect the statistical classification of the FDES 2013 Basic Set.

Step 4: To implement the FDES 2013, several technical meetings were held and training on environment statistics was organized, during which six groups corresponding to the six components of FDES 2013 reflected and proposed environment data, statistics and indicators to be published in the Environment Statistics Yearbook. The groups were supervised and supported by an expert from a support project for statistical activities.

The FDES implementation works consisted of:

- Evaluating available data, their quality, and the lack of environmental data and environment statistics;
- Informing and raising awareness of data producers on the need to continue to produce more data to populate the indicators; and
- Identifying actions to better organize and plan the production of environmental data and statistics.

In 2015, the 2012 and 2013 versions of Environment Statistics Yearbook structured according to the FDES were disseminated to users.

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- In perspective, the following actions are considered:
- Formalizing the inter-ministerial team by an inter-ministerial decree;
- Evaluating in depth the environment statistics system using the ESSAT with all producers of environmental data and statistics;
- Strengthening capacities of the stakeholders (producers and users);
- Improving the quantity and quality of the production of environmental data and statistics; and
- Establishing an environmental database to satisfy users' needs.

Cabo Verde's experience in the application of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013)

(Contributed by Ulisses Cruz, National Statistics Institute, Cabo Verde)

Cabo Verde is an archipelago highly vulnerable to environmental issues. Therefore, it is extremely important to have information concerning environment statistics so that authorities can have reliable information for situation analysis and decision making. On this basis, the National Statistics Institute of Cabo Verde (Instituto Nacional de Estatística de Cabo Verde - INECV)[4] established an Environmental Statistics Unit in 2011. The unit aims to work on methodological instruments and data production of environmental statistics in collaboration with all relevant sectors directly or indirectly involved with environmental issues. Taking into account the transversal nature of the environment sector, INECV made a diagnosis of the environment statistics production and defined an action plan to reverse this situation. Naturally, the strategy had as orientation the information needs of the Strategic Document for Growth and Poverty Reduction (PRSP) and the international guidelines from the Framework for Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Thus, the Environmental Statistics Unit began to gather environmental statistics from existing publications, the population census and surveys database previously conducted by the INECV (Census of 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010, Multi-Purpose Continuous Survey 2012, 2013 and 2014), and a specific survey on waste collected by municipalities.

As part of the defined strategy, INECV has been working in collaboration with leading environmental institutions, mainly with the National Directorate for Environment. From this collaboration, INECV has so far defined a provisional list of core environmental indicators to be followed by the country and identified all institutions responsible for their production. The other key institutions are the General Directorate of Energy, the National Water and Sanitation Agency, the National Institute of Meteorology and Geophysics, the National Institute of Fishing Development, the National Institute for Land Management, the National Institute for Agricultural Research and Development, the National Service of Civil Protection, the General Directorate of Road Transportation, and the General Directorate for Agriculture and Rural Development. The collaboration between INECV and these institutions is fundamental for providing environmental data and producing statistics, as well as indicators. It eventually allowed INECV to respond to part of the request for environment statistics from national and international users (UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics, ECOWAS, AFRISTAT, Community of the Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) and the African Development Bank, etc.).

INECV is currently at the stage of methodological consolidation. However, there is a need to strengthen technical cooperation and coordination between INECV and the key institutions to ensure that the production of environmental statistics is regular and of good quality. Capacity building, institutional commitment and funding for the implementation of specific surveys are also required for this purpose.

Regarding environment surveys, INECV successfully conducted the first "Collection and Treatment of Municipal Waste Survey 2011" (http://www.ine.cv/publicacoes/show.aspx?a=2011&t=Estat%C3%ADsticas+do+Ambiente&p=297) directed to the municipalities and other related entities. In 2014, the second survey, "Survey on the Collection and Treatment of Municipal Waste 2012 and 2013", was initiated in partnership with the National Directorate for Environment. Data processing for this survey is ongoing[5].

In terms of human resources, INECV Environment Statistics Unit was reinforced with one expert in 2015. The methodological document for Environmental Statistics describes the steps required for the implementation of an Environmental Statistics Integrated System (ESIS), and is intended to be a reference document that will enable the country to monitor the core indicators included in PRSP, the second National Action Plan for the Environment (PANA II), Samoa Pathway, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and other national and international initiatives on environment.

[4] The National Statistics Institute of Cabo Verde is the central executive body of production and dissemination of official statistics within the National Statistical System, coating the nature of technically independent authority with administrative and financial autonomy and equity in accordance with its statute (law No. 35 / VII / 2009 of 2 March 2009).

[5] The first draft publication will be concluded in 2015, and validated in the first quarter of 2016.

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For the development of basic statistics to be presented by the ESIS, the guidelines of the FDES 2013 were adopted. The FDES 2013 is relevant and recommended for adoption at country level, regardless of their state of development. Cabo Verde has been guided by this strategic framework in related activities as it allows for:

i) Determining the scope, the constituent components, sub-components and relevant statistical topics;
ii) Contributing to the assessment of data needs, sources, availability and data gaps;
iii) Guiding the development of data collection processes and databases; and
iv) Assisting in the coordination and organization of environment statistics, given its inter-institutional nature.

Taking into account the six components of the FDES 2013, 124 statistics were identified to be monitored in the short term by the ESIS. Around 80% of these statistics belong to the Tier 1 of the FDES 2013.

Following the recommendations accomplished at the "Workshop on Environment Statistics in Support of the Implementation of the FDES 2013 (Lomé, Togo, 19-23 October 2015)" organized by UNSD and ECOWAS for member countries of this region, INECV will make necessary adaptations to the methodological document. For the implementation of FDES 2013, technical assistance will be necessary.

In the short term, INECV plans to host a national workshop to validate the methodological document and create a technical working group with the key institutions and stakeholders. Collaboration protocols between INECV and some of these institutions should facilitate regular production of environmental statistics, and soon allow the publication of the first National Compendium of Environmental Statistics.

Guatemala is using the FDES to organize its Environment Statistics Compendium 2014

(Contributed by Cesar Augusto Ruiz, National Institute of Statistics, Guatemala)

The National Institute of Statistics of Guatemala, through its Section of Environmental Statistics compiled and structured the Environmental Statistical Compendium of Guatemala 2014 using the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013). http://www.ine.gob.gt/sistema/uploads/2015/12/07/xKVwZZE5EY8S6pPqSuwvKPkiDQU1LzkV.pdf

The use of the FDES 2013 in Guatemala was a valuable conceptual and practical experience. This technical effort was an initial step, which made it possible to organize information, identify data gaps, determine duplications, and enhance inter-agency coordination and the collection, compilation and production of environment statistics nationwide collaboratively.

The purpose was to advance towards harmonization of the national environmental statistics following international statistical recommendations in the domain, as well as enabling the coordination of national and international efforts for the continuous and consistent improvement in the planning, organization and systematization of environmental statistics. The use of the Basic Set of Environment Statistics embedded in the FDES also allowed disaggregating information and compiling statistics in an orderly fashion.

Moreover, Guatemala organized its environment statistics into six Components using the FDES structure, which enabled the country to offer statistics to inform about the following six basic questions: What are the environmental conditions of the country? How many natural resources the country has are being used? How does the country manage its waste? What is the evolution and impact of disasters? What is the relationship and impact between population and environment? What is the country doing to protect and restore the environment?

The Environmental Statistical Compendium of Guatemala is an annual report that compiles statistics produced in the country by various government agencies and academia. It aims to inform about different environmental issues such as water, waste, climate change, environmental management and disasters, and their corresponding breakdowns to provide a panoramic view about the state and the use of natural resources and the degree of pollution observed. This report was originally organized using the sustainable development perspective, and since 2014 it was made compatible with the FDES. Its multi-level approach of organizing environment statistics can facilitate the country to better respond to different requirements of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting and the indicators in the Sustainable Development Goals that require environment statistics to be compiled.

The FDES facilitates the organization of statistical series in a simple way for different types of users, especially in developing countries with limited human resources to develop environment statistics.

For Guatemala, the second step looking forward is the exploration and data mining of additional sources of information and the establishments of communication channels with the institutions that produce these data, in order to continue the environment data production and harmonization at the national level.

Developments in Environmental Statistics in New Zealand

(Contributed by Adam Tipper, Statistics New Zealand)

Statistics New Zealand and the Ministry for the Environment released *Environment Aotearoa 2015* on 21 October, the first 'whole of environment' report for New Zealand since 2007. The release consists of four key products, each designed to address different customer needs. The infographic of key findings presents the high level findings which are discussed more fully in the summary report written in plain English. This is presented in a pressure- state - impact format for each of the five environmental domains: air, atmosphere and climate, fresh water, land, and marine. Biodiversity information is presented as a cross cutting theme. The indicator website, available on Statistics New Zealand's website, presents statistical findings, definitions, and methodologies for the 122 indicators, with raw datasets (including metadata) available from the Ministry for the Environment's Data Service. Statistical analysis of environmental trends was conducted where data were of sufficient quality, and a technical report details the processes undertaken.

Environment Aotearoa 2015 was compiled from existing data. Crown research institutes, universities, and central and local government organizations were key data suppliers for this report. Indicators were selected, in consultation with experts, based on their relevance to the topics (as set by Ministers) and data quality. The topics are currently under public consultation and will be set in regulation in 2016. Data quality is assessed against the six criteria from the Principles and Protocols for Producers of Tier 1 Statistics: relevance, accuracy, timeliness, consistency/coherency, accessibility, and interpretability. Given the variability in data quality, careful consideration was required on how to convey data quality issues while making more information available. The use of data quality icons and metadata assisted in this aim. Most indicators relate to environmental state, while pressures and impact indicators are relatively undeveloped. It is being considered how the integration of indicators produced under the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) framework may enhance the future analysis of economic pressures and impacts. Methodological guidance that facilitates international comparisons, such as that provided in the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013), will be a key source of information for compiling and developing future environmental indicators.

New Zealand's national-level environmental reporting framework is set out under the Environmental Reporting Act 2015. The Act prescribes a pressure-state-impact framework covering the five environmental domains listed above. Pressures include both human and natural pressures. Impact categories are defined in the Act and cover: ecological integrity, public health, the economy, te ao Māori (the Māori world view), and culture and recreation. Response is not included to maintain the independence and impartiality of the reporting. The Act requires the government statistician to follow best practice principles and protocols and have the sole responsibility for deciding the procedures and methods that are to be used in producing the statistics. Along with the Secretary for the Environment, the Government Statistician is to act independently of any Minister of the Crown in producing and publishing an environmental report. The Act requires synthesis reports to be produced on a regular three-yearly cycle, and a domain report every six months. Planning is underway to release domain reports for fresh water and marine in 2016. The next synthesis report will be released in 2018. There is an ongoing data improvements work program to continue to address the gaps in New Zealand's environmental information.

The Act affirms the independence of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Environment (PCE) who may (at his or her discretion) report on an environmental report and the processes that produced it. Following the release of the first domain report on New Zealand's air quality in 2014, the PCE released a review of the report with recommendations for improvements in environmental reporting. A good practice guide for environmental reporting is being prepared, outlining the principles and protocols to be applied in compiling future reports for New Zealand.

More information is available at:
http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/environment/environmental-reporting-series.aspx.

Tanzania's experience in the application of the Framework on Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) and activities and plans in the area of environment statistics

(Contributed by Stephen Maganda, National Bureau of Statistics, Tanzania)

Historical Background of Environment Statistics in Tanzania

The growing pressures on environment issues and increased environment awareness by the general public have generated a need for reliable information on environment to facilitate scientific planning and decision making on environment related matters.

Despite the fact that the environment in which humans live has been in existence for decades: it was not until in the mid-nineties, that, with the assistance of Statistics Sweden the Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) managed to compiled a subject matter pamphlet called "Environment Statistics on Tanzania Mainland, 1994". However, the publication was not updated due to, among other things, lack of a formal section within NBS that deals entirely with environmental issues in the past. In order to address this shortfall and fulfill global commitments, the NBS established a Department for Environment Statistics in 2004. Since then, NBS in collaboration with various environment related institutions has been producing the Environment Statistics Publication. The most recent publication is the 2014 Environment Statistics Report, which has been posted on the NBS website at: http://www.nbs.go.tz/.

Collection of Environment Statistics

In Tanzania, environmental statistics include most of the variables, such as weather, rainfall, vegetation and marine, collected in developing countries. It is important to mention that data for many of the variables are not readily available due to technological and resource constraints. It is, however, envisaged that in the long run, most of the data will be collected. Therefore, a complete set of environmental quality data will, in the future, involve quite a number of sectors and institutions falling under the sector of Water and Irrigation for water quality and quantity, while the National Environmental Management Council (NEMC) will supply data on air quality, noise levels and other areas. The ministries of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives and Energy and Minerals will supply data on land use and its quality.

Efforts to streamline the collection of environmental statistics in Tanzania are underway including the initiative of Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP). The NBS collaborates with various institutions to facilitate the availability of quality environment statistics. These institutions include Division of Environment – Vice President Office, the Economic Research Bureau (ERB) at University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Ardhi University that provides, among other studies, lands and architectural studies, NEMC and other environment related institutions. This collaboration will ultimately lead to a systematic collection of environmental statistics that will facilitate planning and informed decision making for sustainable development. Application of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) is also underway. FDES 2013 was endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2013 as the framework for strengthening environment statistics programmes in countries. NBS has received this framework with great attitude and expects to implement in collaboration with various environment related institutions.

Policy Framework of Environment in Tanzania

The major area that the Government of Tanzania aims at addressing in both the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the development vision (Vision 2025) is the reduction of poverty. To realize this vision, the Government developed and implemented a Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) from 2001/02 to 2004/05. It was followed by a five-year National Strategy for Growth and Reduction for Poverty I (NSGRP I), whose implementation started in July 2005. Tanzania is currently implementing NSGRP II.

One of the major areas of concern for NSGRP is the growth and reduction of poverty whereby the anticipated broad outcome is the achievement and sustainability of a broad based and equitable growth. Unlike the previous PRS, NSGRP explicitly addresses the poverty-environment linkages. Some of the environment related targets include: reduced negative impacts on environment and peoples' livelihood; reduced land degradation and less loss of biodiversity; and provision of reliable and affordable energy to consumers.

The recently endorsed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will play a key role in the availability of environment statistics in Tanzania. This is due to the fact that the only way to monitor the SDGs properly is through statistics.

As such, the importance of data in implementing the SDGs cannot be overemphasized. In this context, it is important for Tanzania to position itself in focus of adopting the new Global Development Agenda, especially be prepared in terms of data requirements.

The experience of MDGs implementation, both at national and global levels, among other things, requires Tanzania to be prepared to tackle data challenges in monitoring the progress for the SDGs. Data are the lifeblood of decision-making and the raw material for accountability.

High Level Forum on Environment Statistics (Lomé Togo, 27-28 October 2015)

(Contributed by Feyssal Moumouni, Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources, Togo)

The Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources of Togo coincided the timing of the organization of the High Level Forum on Environment Statistics on 27-28 October 2015 with the Workshop on Environment Statistics in support of the Implementation of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region in order to benefit from the presence of UNSD in Togo. The theme of the Forum was "Issues and Challenges of the Sustainable Development".

The Forum gathered participants from various ministries and agencies, including the Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources, the Director General of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic and Demographic Studies (INSEED), and representatives from the European Union, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and UNSD (represented by two staff members). The Ministry of the Environment and Forest Resources gave an opening speech at the forum and the Secretary General of the Government chaired the first session.

The Forum was split in four different sessions: Environment Statistics and Sustainable Development; Relevance of Environment Statistics in the Context of Climate Change and Natural Disaster; Need for and Current State of Environment Statistics in Togo; and The Way Forward. UNSD made presentations in the first and fourth session, and chaired the second one.

The Forum was well received by the participants who engaged into the debates after each session. They showed willingness to improve the collaboration in order to produce more environment statistics. The organizers, who were employees of both the Ministry of the Environment and Forest Resources and the National Institute of Statistics and Economic and Demographic Studies, were pleased to see participants' interest in environment statistics and the recommendations of the forum. The recommendations will be used as the cornerstone leading to the implementation of the FDES 2013 and to meeting the demand for environmental indicators for monitoring the SDGs.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

47th Session of the Statistical Commission (New York, 8-10 March 2016)

Third Meeting of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics (20-22 April 2016)

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